

# Cocopah language

**Cocopah** is a Delta language of the Yuman language family spoken by the Cocopah. Cocopah is believed to have derived from the Hokan language, and it is related to the other Native American languages of Mojave and Kumeyaay.<sup>[4]</sup> Cocopah is considered an endangered language, with fewer than 400 speakers at the turn of the 21st century. However, in an effort to keep the language alive, Yuma County's Cocopah Museum began offering classes teaching Cocopah to children in 1998.

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## History

Much of the Cocopah language was passed down through speaking, rather than through writing. This, in large part, is due to the fact that the language did not have an alphabet for the majority of its existence. It was not until the 1970s that a language was developed, when a scholar decided to approach this task for a dissertation. Although the creation of an alphabet was useful, the original proved to be less than ideal, and so a new one was developed by the tribe in the early 2000s. As the revival of the language had progressed, it became apparent that the language did not have words to fit the advances made in modern society. In turn, the tribe developed new words to attribute to modern objects that did not exist in the ancient language. The elders of the tribe were given the responsibility of developing these new words and/or phrases.<sup>[5]</sup>

While the Cocopah tribe inhabits parts of Arizona and parts of Mexico, the written language differs based on the location of the tribe. For instance, Cocopah in Mexico use a different orthography than Cocopah in Arizona. The Mexican-based Cocopah use an orthography that was designed by the INALI, an organization that examines and protects the rights of endangered languages.

## Sounds

### Consonants

Cocopah	
<i>Kwikapa</i>	
Native to	Mexico, United States
Region	Baja California, Arizona, Sonora
Ethnicity	Cocopah
Native speakers	370 in the United States (2015 census) <sup>[1]</sup> 145 in Mexico <sup>[2]</sup>
Language family	<div>Yuman <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> Delta–Californian<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Cocopah</b></li></ul></li></ul></div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	coc
Glottolog	coco1261 ( <span>http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/coco1261</span> ) <sup>[3]</sup>

Cocopah has 21 consonants:

	<u>Bilabial</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>		<u>Retroflex</u>	<u>Palatal</u>		<u>Velar</u>		<u>Glottal</u>
		<u>plain</u>	<u>lateral</u>		<u>plain</u>	<u>lateral</u>	<u>plain</u>	<u>labial</u>	
<u>Nasal</u>	m	n			ɲ				
<u>Stop</u>	p	t		ɖ	tʃ		k	kʷ	ʔ
<u>Fricative</u>		s		ʂ	ʃ	ʃʲ	x	xʷ	
<u>Approximant</u>			l		j	lʲ		w	
<u>Trill</u>		r							

- /r/ is usually a trill [r] but sometimes is a flap [ɾ].
- /tʃ, ɲ, ʃ/ are postalveolar (palato-alveolar). /lʲ, ʃʲ/ are palatalized alveolar consonants.
- /ʃʲ/ is usually palatalized, but unlike /lʲ/ it does not contrast with a non-palatalized [ʃ].

## Vowels

Cocopah has 4 vowels.

	<u>Front</u>	<u>Back</u>
<u>Close</u>	i / iː	u / uː
<u>Mid</u>	e / eː	
<u>Open</u>	a / aː	

Cocopah has both short and long vowels.

## Syllable & phonotactics

The Cocopah syllable:

(C)(C)(C)V(:)(C)(C)

- Word-initial two-consonant clusters usually consist of a fricative plus another consonant, e.g. /sp, ʂm, ʃp, xɖʃ/. Rarer two-consonant clusters start with a lateral or a stop consonant, e.g. /lɖʃ, ʃʲɖʃ, ps, tʃp/.
- Three-consonant clusters are rare, recorded examples include /pxk, pxkʷ, spx/.

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## References

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1. [Cocopah \(https://www.ethnologue.com/19/language/coc/\)](https://www.ethnologue.com/19/language/coc/) at *Ethnologue* (19th ed., 2016)
2. inali
3. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Cocopa" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/coco1261>). *Glottolog* 3.0. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
4. [Vocabulary in Native American Languages \(http://www.native-languages.org/cocopa\\_words.htm\)](http://www.native-languages.org/cocopa_words.htm). (n.d.). Retrieved February 09, 2018, from [http://www.native-languages.org/cocopa\\_words.htm](http://www.native-languages.org/cocopa_words.htm)
5. "Cocopah language class seeks to keep ancient tongue from dying out" (July 29, 2007) *Yuma Sun* (<http://www.yumasun.com/news/language-35558-cocopah-tribe.html>) Archived (<https://archive.is/20130209212010/http://www.yumasun.com/news/language-35558-cocopah-tribe.html>) February 9, 2013, at [Archive.today](http://archive.today)

## External links

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- "Native American Audio Collections: Cocopa" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160513172449/https://amphilsoc.org/exhibit/natamaudio/cocopa>). *American Philosophical Society*. Archived from the original (<http://www.amphilsoc.org/exhibit/natamaudio/cocopa>) on 2016-05-13. Retrieved 2013-05-20.
  - [Cocopa Swadesh vocabulary list \(https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Swadesh\\_lists\\_for\\_Yuman\\_languages\)](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Swadesh_lists_for_Yuman_languages) (from Wiktionary)
  - [Cocopa dictionary on Google Books \(https://books.google.com/books?id=KF3l2fxKZMkC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false\)](https://books.google.com/books?id=KF3l2fxKZMkC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)
  - [Cocopah language audio Bible stories and lessons - free mp3 downloads \(http://globalrecordings.net/en/language/18\)](http://globalrecordings.net/en/language/18)
  - [Cocopah basic lexicon at the Global Lexicostatistical Database \(http://starling.rinet.ru/cgi-bin/response.cgi?root=new100&morpho=0&basename=new100\hoklyum&first=0\)](http://starling.rinet.ru/cgi-bin/response.cgi?root=new100&morpho=0&basename=new100\hoklyum&first=0)
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